

HEADLINE PERSONALITY

SAC's Gen. Power Sticks to His Guns

By the Associated Press

Gen. Thomas Sarsfield Power, who carries the awesome responsibility of running the Strategic Air Command, has found himself at odds with the top men in the Pentagon more than once.

The personality of this ramrod, stopwatch, spit-and-polish four-star general makes it a distinct possibility that it could happen again.

Gen. Power's latest disagreement was with Secretary of Defense Gates. In a New York speech last month Gen. Power said that without an ample missile warning system, a surprise attack by 300 Russian missiles could virtually wipe out in 30 minutes America's bomber and missile retaliatory force. This is the SAC which Gen. Power commands. He advocates keeping some bombers in the air at all times to avoid such a sneak attack.

Mr. Gates, justifying the administration's defense budget before a congressional committee, said he and the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider Gen. Power's estimate unrealistic. He carefully avoided any personal criticism of Gen. Power.

Yesterday Gen. Power got a chance to back down if he wished. His reply to a Senate committee was characteristic: I still stand by my statements in that speech."

Book Disagreement

Gen. Power had a disagreement last year with Mr. Gates' predecessor, Neil H. McElroy.

Gen. Power had written a book called "Design for Survival." Copies of the manuscript circulated on Capitol Hill and some of it became public.

Playing on the same theme, Gen. Power had written at one point that an enemy attack "would find us ready to strike back but ill prepared to ward off the blow."

Mr. McElroy put a Pentagon lid on the book and refused permission for it to be published. His only explanation was that it was inappropriate for a major commander on active duty to write a book about his current area of command. Gen. Power accepted the ruling in silence, but it was obvious to those in the Pentagon that he deemed the book too critical of administration defense policies.



FULL NAME—Thomas Sarsfield Power.

CLAIM TO FAME—Chief of the Strategic Air Command.

HOME—Baltimore.

BIRTHDAY—June 18, 1905.

EDUCATION—Barnard Preparatory School, New York; A. C. Primary Flying School; Advanced Flying School.

JOB—Construction engineer, 1924-1928; commissioned second lieutenant in the Army Air Reserve, 1929, advancing through grades to full general; in World War II led B-29 raids on Tokyo; deputy assistant chief of air staff, 1946-1948; air attache to London, July-October, 1948; vice commander, Strategic Air Command, 1948-1954; commander, SAC, 1957 to present.

FAMILY—Wife, Mae Ayre Power; no children.

HOBBIES—Golf, fishing.

Gen. Power, 55, has been called "tense," "overly ambitious," "dour" and "grim."

"The Right Man"

He also was called exactly the right man to take over command of the Strategic Air Command in 1957 from Gen. Curtis LeMay.

Gen. Power had served as Gen. LeMay's right arm at SAC for almost six years, then took charge in 1954 of the Air Research and Development Command, which at that time was developing the Atlas and Titan long-range missiles.

When he's scheduled to go somewhere in his staff plane he pulls up in his command car at precisely one minute before departure time. When he steps from the car the star-

board engine is started. As he climbs up the ramp the port engine is started. Exactly on time he slips into the pilot's seat and shoves off. If anyone in the party is 30 seconds late he gets left behind.

He is an avid golfer and fisherman when he has time and enjoys reading history and biography. An expert in judo, the Japanese art of self defense, he holds the coveted "black belt" rating in the sport.

Gen. Power was born in New York and caught the flying fever at an early age around the primitive airports of Long Island. When he applied for air cadet training he found himself short of college credits. He made these up with an intensive course of night study.

He married the former Mae Ayre in 1936 while on duty in the Philippines.

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